

Enlighten Topline Results: NHS 2048

October 2025

Question 1

Thinking about the future of public services in Scotland, which of the following statements comes closest to your view for each of the following areas?

Base: All (1,020)	Scotland's NHS	Scotland's social care system
	%	%
It needs significant change and reform	45	51
It needs some moderate change and reform	48	37
It does not require any change or reform	4	4
Don't Know	3	8

Question 2

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements.....

Base: All (1,020)	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	NET: Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	NET: Disagree	DK/Prefer not to say
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Healthcare should remain free at the point of use, no matter who provides the service	63	25	88	9	2	0	2	1
If current trends continue, the NHS in Scotland will be worse in 10 years than it is today	47	30	77	13	5	2	6	4
The NHS should focus more on prevention and keeping people healthy, not just treating illness.	36	39	75	18	5	1	6	2
The NHS in Scotland is worse now than it was 10 years ago.	41	30	71	16	5	4	8	5
The current model of the NHS is no longer sustainable	29	34	63	20	8	5	13	4
Private providers should play a bigger role in delivering NHS services	20	31	50	22	10	13	22	6
I would consider using private healthcare if NHS waiting times were too long.	19	31	50	19	12	14	26	5

Question 3

Thinking about the NHS in Scotland, which of the following, if any, do you think are the most serious challenges it faces?

Base: All (1,020)	%
Long waiting times for treatment	45
Staff shortages and burnout	39
Waiting times to see a GP	34
Lack of funding and resources	33
Ageing population and rising demand	28
The amount of funding it gets from government	20
Administrative inefficiency (e.g. slow processes, duplication of work, or poor use of technology)	19
Ineffective leadership or governance	17
Poor integration with social care	13
Over-reliance on hospitals instead of community care	11
The role of private healthcare	7
Resistance to change or innovation among senior management	7
Inequalities in access and outcomes	7
Other (please specify)	2
None (NHS does not face challenges)	1

Question 4

Thinking about the future of health and social care in Scotland, what do you think are the most important issues to consider? Looking at the list below please rank in order of importance for shaping the future of Scotland’s health and care system. (1 = most important, 5 = least important. Please rank all five.)

Base: All (1,020)	1	2	3	4	5
	%	%	%	%	%
Sustainability : making the system financially and operationally viable for the long term	30	24	17	15	13
Equity: ensuring fair access for all, regardless of background or income	23	20	20	18	20
Accountability: clear leadership, transparency, and responsibility	18	21	22	24	15
Choice : giving people more control over how and where they receive care	16	16	19	21	28
Innovation: embracing new models, technologies, and ways of working	12	19	23	22	24

Question 5

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about social care in Scotland?

Base: All (1,020)	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	NET: Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	NET: Disagree	DK/Prefer not to say
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Improving social care should be a top priority to reduce pressure on the NHS.	38	43	81	12	3	1	4	4
I understand how social care is funded and delivered in Scotland.	14	29	42	26	18	7	25	7
If I or someone close to me needed social care, I'm confident that the support we need is available.	12	24	36	23	24	11	35	6
Social care services in Scotland are affordable for most people who need them	11	22	33	23	20	12	32	13
From what I know or have experienced, the social care system in Scotland is working well.	10	18	28	24	23	15	38	10

Question 6

Thinking about ways the government could improve healthcare in Scotland, which three of the following policy options do you think would be most acceptable?

Base: All (1,020)	%
Allowing more non-doctors (e.g. nurse practitioners, pharmacists) to lead care	51
Introducing means testing so that higher earners contribute financially towards non-urgent or elective healthcare services they use.	43
Placing more responsibility on individuals to manage their own health and care	35
Creating citizen panels or assemblies to shape local health and care decisions	31
Expanding the role of private or third-sector providers	29
Asking taxpayers (including myself) to pay more to fund healthcare services	28
Reducing the number of healthcare services offered free at the point of use	17
Taking funding out of the NHS to fund social care	15

Question 7

Which of the following do you think are the biggest barriers to achieving meaningful health and social care reform in Scotland?

Base: All (1,020)	%
Lack of funding	56
Workforce shortages and burnout	41
Ineffective leadership or governance	39
Short-term thinking driven by election cycles	32
Ageing population reducing the tax base	29
Fragmentation between health and social care	27
Lack of consensus across political parties	19
Risk aversion and resistance to innovation	13
Public resistance to change	11
Other (please specify)	2

Technical details:

- The survey was designed by Diffley Partnership and invitations were issued online using the Norstat panel.
- Results are based on a survey of 1,020 respondents.
- Fieldwork was conducted between 5-15 October
- Results are weighted to the profile of all adults in Scotland aged 16+.